for import by bulk consumers to keep a check on prices of these tyres. To encourage creation of fresh capacity for the manufacture of automotive tyres and tubes, the industry has been exempted from licensing under the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act. Government have also ensured maximisation of tyre production through continuous monitoring and regular interaction with the industry.

Raw Materials for Plastic Industries

3810. SHRI SHYAM LAL KAMAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether plastic packaging industries in private sector are on the verge of closure due to abnormal increase in the price of raw materials like polyester, plastic adhesives and polyester inks; and

(b) if so, the steps proposed to be taken to reduce prices of the raw materials?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (DR. CHINTA MOHAN): (a) Consequent to the increase in price of petroleum products during the gulf crisis and also recently, as well as the exchange rate adjustment and other fiscal measures after Union Budget, prices of all petrochemical material including plastics have increased.

(b) There is no price control over petrochemical items including plastics.

Liability of Errant Multi-National Companies

3811. SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether punitive action against errant companies is one of the best ways of raising health and safety standards;

(b) if so, after Bhopal Gas leak experience, what kinds of corporate liability the Government propose to establish; and

(c) how the Government propose to ensure multinational corporate liability?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (DR. CHINTA MOHAN): (a) The Factories (Amendment) Act places the responsibility for ensuring the safety, health and welfare of workers on the occupier. The emphasis has thus shifted from a prescriptive approach to one of self-regulation. The enforcement agency must impart technical guidance and use persuasive methods to see that the occupier discharges his statutory responsibility. In the event of serious or persistent default punitive measures should be adopted against the occupier.

(b) and (c) Ministry of Environment and Forests are proposing to bring up a comprehensive legislation for setting up a National Environment Tribunal which shall take care of Corporate Liability, including multinational Corporate liability.

[*Translation*]

Irregularities in Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation

3812. SHRI UPENDRA NATH VERMA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation has been incurring losses from its very inception in 1978;

(b) whether eight Chairman-cum-Managing Directors were appointed in the above undertaking during the period of thirteen years and none of them was allowed to complete his term of five years; if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the total loss incurred by the Hisdustan Fertilizer Corporation so far has exceeded its total capital outlay.

(d) whether the Director (Finance) though a non-technical incumbent, acts as Chairman-cum-Managing Director in his absence contrary to the established practice;

(e) if so, whether the Government propose to constitute an inquiry to look into the whole affairs of the Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation; and

(f) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (DR. CHINTA MOHAN): (a) and (c) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (d) There have been one Managing Director and six Chairman & Managing Directors in Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation since its inception. Out of these seven, two left on superannuation, one on completion of his tenure and four resigned. The post of Chairman & Managing Director (CMD) has been vacant and pending appointment of CMD, the Director (Finance) is acting as CMD.

(e) No, Sir.

(f) The losses of HFC are mainly due to low capacity utilisation of its plants resulting from unproven technology and equipment, power and labour problems. A high powered Committee constituted by Govt. in 1986 went into the working of HFC and came to the same conclusion. Since the losses are not on account of any irregularity in the plants, it is not proposed to hold an enquiry.

[*English*]

Availability of Cement

3813. SHRI RAMTAHAL CHOUDHARY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received complaints regarding shortage of general portland cement in the market due to under-utilisation of production capacities by the cement factories;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the extent of increase in the production of various types of cement during last three years; and

(d) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to increase the availability of general portland cement to the public in the market?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (PROF. P. J. KURIEN): (a) and (b) Government has not received any complaints regarding shortage of general portland cement in the market due to under-utilisation of production capacity by the factories. Average capacity utilisation in the cement industry as a whole was as high as 82% of installed capacity in 1990-91. However, there have been instances of shortage of cement in the deficit regions, mainly on account of transportation bottlenecks and local constraints.

(c) Information regarding production of different varieties of cement and percentage increase in production during 1988 to 1990 is given in the Statement enclosed.

(d) Following are some of the important steps taken by the Government to increase availability of general portland cement to the public in the market:—

(i) Cement Industry has been delicensed i.e. no licence is required for setting up a new unit or for substantial expansion.

(ii) Government is closely monitoring the availability of coal, railway wagons and other infrastructural support to the Cement Industry and remedial action is taken wherever necessary.

(iii) In order to minimise impact on regional imbalances, Railways have been requested to move cement from surplus areas to deficit areas on a regular basis.